



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING SERVICES  
Office of the Director  
145 N Street, NE, Washington, D.C. 20530

**COPS**★

## My Recent Road Trip

One of the great opportunities that comes with being the director of the COPS Office is traveling around the country to meet with local, state, and tribal law enforcement professionals and leaders, and to see firsthand how they incorporate community policing into their organization and their daily activities. In April I took a unique road trip through six cities in five states in one week. As I travelled from California, to Texas, to Colorado, to Nevada, and finally on to Washington State, I saw the relevance of community policing to overall public safety and national security become more and more evident with each stop.

If you follow @COPSOoffice on Twitter, you already know that the agencies and communities I visited and the events I attended were incredibly diverse: I started in Oakland, California, where I attended a National League of Cities “City Leadership to Promote Black Male Achievement” technical assistance cross-site convening meeting. From there it was Fort Worth, Texas, to converse with the IACP Executive Committee, the leaders of one of the largest and oldest police leadership organizations in the world, with more than 20,000 members worldwide. Then I joined Chief Yost Zakhary, the IACP President, in visiting Woodway, Texas, for a presentation on the Midway Independent School District (ISD) comprehensive school safety program. Next I had the honor of presenting the COPS Office 2013 Sutin Award to the Vail, Colorado, Police Department, and their non-profit partner, Catholic Charities, for their innovative immigrant outreach program. In Las Vegas, Nevada, I joined Congressman Steve Horsford, Sheriff Douglas Gillespie, and law enforcement and community leaders from that area for a roundtable discussion and Town Hall meeting on public trust and policing, and flew from there to Seattle, Washington, to meet with Mayor Ed Murray, and Interim-Police Chief Harry Bailey to discuss technical assistance available from the COPS Office.

My observations reinforced the notion that community policing is not just a program, nor is it something that only works in some places or at some times, or only for police agencies of a certain size. One of the most unique characteristics of American policing is the diversity of the more than 17,000 law enforcement agencies that comprise the profession. Whether an agency has one officer or deputy or 40,000, whether it is urban or rural, all benefit from adopting community policing as its core operational philosophy. This was evident as I travelled from site to site. For example, in Oakland, leaders from 11 cities throughout the country focused on using community policing to build trust in communities of color as an essential part of the National League of Cities’ “Black Male Achievement” initiative. In Fort Worth, Texas, IACP leaders discussed everything from the President’s “My Brother’s Keeper” Initiative, to intelligence gathering, to National Security, and in each discussion the focus remained on collaboration and building trust. In Woodway, Texas, law enforcement leaders and school officials from that region discussed how to enhance school safety through building trust and collaboration with students, school officials, and the police, and not through punitive disciplinary policies that contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline. In Vail, law enforcement leaders from Eagle County met and focused on building trust with the immigrant communities that seek the American dream of opportunity there in the mountain resort. In Las Vegas and Seattle, police and city leaders are working together to build public trust and confidence in the community and transform their departments into models of constitutional policing and procedural justice.



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My travels also showed that progressive and creative leadership is not simply based on the size of an agency or the level of crime it faces. The leadership I witnessed during my road trip came from agencies of all sizes; from leaders tackling significant gang violence to leaders working in a resort community with low crime. These communities represent the diversity of our nation and the strength of American policing, and serve as examples of what community policing can and does accomplish. I have returned from my road trip reinvigorated and more confident than ever that the advancement of community policing is the key strategy for improving public safety and security in this nation. We at the COPS Office look forward to continuing to support your work and to share your successes so that together we can help the field advance the field.

Sincerely,

Ronald L. Davis  
Director